VI. *A Diſcourſe of the Viper, and ſome other Poyſons, Wrote by Sr.* Theodore de Mayerne, *after Diſcourſing with Mr.* Pontæus. *Communicated by Sir* Theodore de Vaux, *M. D. and S. R. S.*

THe Venom of a Viper in it ſelf is not Mortal to a Robuſt and Sound Body; and tho very unhappy and miſchievous accidents attend it; as a great Tumour, Tenſion and Weight of the Part, Humidity and Variety of Colours, Phrenſies, Convulſions and Vomitings; yet in Eight or Ten days at moſt theſe accidents are over, although the Patient may be very ill, yet he recovers again; whilſt the Poyſon having run through divers parts of the body; at laſt it always throws it ſelf into the *Scrotum*, ſwelling it extreamly, cauſes a great heat and quantity of Urine, very hot and ſharp, by which it is diſcharged; this evacuation being the ordinary and moſt certain *Criſis* of the Diſeaſe: It is obſervable that the perſpiration being obſtructed by the Poyſon, a Man bit by a Viper and ſwelled up, in three or four days ſhall weigh almoſt as much more then he did before.

A ſickly Perſon under an ill habit of Body, or fearful, dies Infallibly, and in ſhort time by this Venom without ſpeedy help.

In the extream Nervous Parts, near the Pulſe and Tongue, the bites are dangerous, and accidents very painful.

Freſh Vipers that have not bit, but have the bladders of the Gums full of Venom, are the moſt Miſchievous.

Moun-

Mountebanks to impoſe upon the People, either make their Vipers bite before they bring them out; or with a Needle ſcratch the Gums, and preſs out the Poyſon.

They make us believe that a bite on the left breaſt near the heart, is more mortal than elſewhere, but this is a cheat, it cauſing only a great ſwelling on all that ſide of the body, on the Neck and Face, which afterwards falls down (as was ſaid) into the Scrotum, and is evacuated by Urine.

For theſe great and painful ſwellings, the Remedy is to drink the Decoction of *Marrubium*, or the powder taken inwardly, and a fomentation with the decoction, applying the reſt on the place. *Ariſtolochia* is alſo a ſtrong and powerful Antidote againſt the Viper; ſo that if one be bit on the Tongue, he need only take a ſlice of this Root, heat it and apply it, and it goes away.

Pontæus a Chymical Mountebank, a Native of *England*, and an Apothecary by Trade, from whom I had the above mentioned Obſervations, was one day accidentally bit by a freſh Viper on his right wriſt; he thought it would have killed him; one of the greateſt pains he ſuffered was almoſt an inſupportable Tenſion of the palm of his hand.

He compoſed his Antidote of Extract of Juniper berries, drawn with a decoction of roots of round *Ariſtolochia*, of *Succiſa*, *Marrubium Album*, flower of Brimſtone and of white Vitriol.

For Poyſon not Corroſive, ſuch as thoſe of Animals and Vegetables, and even for the Plague it ſelf; (which he believes he can cure by the ſame Remedy), He makes uſe of no Vitriol. But if the Poyſon be ſublimate, which of it ſelf excites Vomiting, he adds Vitriol, not in a proportion to Vomit as a Drachme, but only a ſcruple or half a dram, the Vomiting being aſſiſted by the Corroſive Poyſon it ſelf.

To encreaſe the Value of this Antidote with the People, when the Experiment is made on Dogs; to that Dog which they would have dy of the bite of the Viper, he gives with the Antidote a quarter of a *Nux Vomica* not powdred, only cut in bits, and the next day the Dog dies. If it were powdered the Dog would dye in half an hour.

He ſays *Nux Vomica* is ſo called by contraries, for it never Vomits but ſhuts up the Stomach, and contracts the Nerves by its poyſon.

To preſerve the Dogs alive, you muſt give them with the Antidote or any thing elſe, three or four grains of ſublimate, which immediately ſets them a Vomiting, and ſo ſaves them alive.

He offers to take all ſorts of Poyſons, even Corroſives after an ordinary meal, and for a tryal of Skill he refuſes them not on an empty Stomach.

He much eſteems Morſus Diaboli, Succiſa or Devills-bit, againſt all ſorts of Poyſons; he laughs at the Poyſon of a Toad, which he ſays has none at all, no more then a Frog, and affirms he has eat ſeveral without any miſchief.

His Sugar or Remedy for Worms in Children, is fifteen grains of *Mercurius dulcis* with five grains of Scammony, and two or three times as much Sugar, made up in Lozenges.

He ſays, That this Doſe which in *France* purges grown Perſons, does nothing in *England* on thoſe above fifteen years old, and ought to be augmented.

His *Mercurius dulcis* is made without Vitriol, which tho good is yet Corroſive, he takes only aſhes with decrepitated Salt.

The manner of the acting of the Vipers Poyſon is thus: In about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour, a Syncope or Swooning ſeizes them with Tremblings and Convulſions, tingling of the Ears, and frequently Deafneſs for a moment; next as it were

were a white Sail comes before their eyes, which ſoon vaniſhes: On the place of the bite a ſwelling riſes at firſt of the bigneſs of a Pea, which grows as big as a Bean or a Nut,, and increaſing inlarges it ſelf over the Neighbouring parts, to a very conſiderable Tumour and Streching of the fleſh, which grows *ædematous*, and by little and little falls into the Scrotum, and leaves the part black, blew, and yellow.

It makes as it were bags in the skin, which feel heavy when you walk as if filled with Quickſilver.

Do what you will the Poyſon will have its courſe, and is uſually three days before it comes to the heighth, and as long abating.

For theſe great ſwellings and ſtretching of the parts, a Fomentation and Cataplaſm is made with *Marrubium*, *Tapſus barbatus* and Agrimony.

The Gall of the Viper is no ways Venemous, and *Ponteus* ſays, he uſually gives it without any ill effect or trouble, but its bitterneſs; all the Poyſon is in a Liquor in the Gums, which is yellow like Oyl, of which you may eaſily diſarm the Viper.

The Viper is the moſt Venemous of Serpents, the *Aſp* is but a ſpecies of the Viper. The *Napellus* is a very dangerous Poyſon, acting by its Acrimony, but you muſt take a great quantity of it; it burns the throat extreamly as does Alum, but it is cured by the Antidote.

Crude Antimony does nothing if attacqued by the Antidote.

The moſt miſchievous of all Poyſons is Opium, of which having given an exceſſive quantity to his Servant, at firſt he had Convulſions, then ſtrange Vomitings, not able to let any thing go down into his Stomach, a ſleepineſs followed: all which time they kept him awake as much as poſſible. At laſt all of a ſudden he grew well, and called for Victuals.

Succiſa

Succiſa, or Devils bit, is excellent for Poyſons, eſpecially the Plague; and it is obſervable, that it is ſo powerful a Sudorifick, that laying the ſick Perſon whether of the Plague or other malignant Fever, on a Bed of that herb, moderately hot, he ſhall ſweat till they take him off, and much more if he drinks of the decoction or juice of the herb, which in Summer they take all, and in Winter of the root only.

He ſays, That for the Dropſy after all other things, one of the beſt Remedies in the World, is to take *Morſus Diaboli* and put it over the fire in a dry Kettle, that it may wet it only with its own juice, and of this to apply a quantity to the Belly and Reins of the Patient, covering him up warm, and ſo provoke ſweat; which will come away in great quantity, and may be maintained according to the ſtrength of the Patient, and Exigency of the Caſe.

VII. An Account of BOOKS, *Viz.*

An Account of ſeveral late Voyages and Diſcoveries to the South and North towards the Streights of Magellan, *the South Seas, the vaſt Tracts of Land beyond* Hollandia Nova, *&c. Alſo towards* Nova Zembla, Greenland *or* Spitsberg, Groynland *or* Engronland, *&c. By Sir* John Narborough, *Capt.* Jaſmen Taſman, *Capt.* John Wood, *and* Frederick Marten *of* Hamburgh. *To which are annexed a large Introduction and Supplement. The whole Illuſtrated with Charts and Figures.* London: *Printed for* Sam. Smith *and* Benj. Walford, *Printers to the* Royal Society, *at the* Prince's Arms *in St.* Paul's *Church-yard.* 1694. In Octavo.

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